



Mayor's State of the City Address January 22, 2008

Good evening and welcome. For six years now, I have had the distinct privilege of delivering to you the State of the City Address. I along with my fellow council members, fellow elected officials, city staff, business and community leaders and others who are present, welcome, and thank you so much for being here tonight. I am honored by your presence.

I want to give a special welcome to our newest colleague, Farad Ali (who has asked to be excused from tonight's meeting), and to the new leader of the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce who joined us a few months ago, President/CEO Mrs. Casey Steinbacher.

I want to say "thank you" to my fellow residents, who are viewing us on Durham Government TV Cable Channel 8 and the City of Durham's website. To our audience, I want to thank you for allowing me this point of privilege to deliver the "State of the City" address, as we did last year, at the beginning of the Council meeting.

If you live and work in Durham, I don't have to tell you "Great Things are Happening in Durham."

The City continued to make our downtown a destination point. One of the major driving forces is the success of our Public/Private Partnerships. Last year saw exciting and promising developments continue:

- Thousands visited downtown in June to celebrate "Durham Rising" the successful conversion of three main downtown streets from one-way to two way streets (Main, Corcoran and Chapel Hill) easing the navigation of our downtown streets. The appearance of downtown has been improved with decorative sidewalks, landscaping and lighting.
- Celebrations were held to mark milestones for two other important projects:
 - The topping out ceremony for Durham's new Performing Arts Center, scheduled for completion in November 2008. This venue promises to be a one-of-a-kind attraction for Broadway shows and other exciting performances in a new 2800 seat theater. This \$44 million dollar project is on time and on budget.
 - The groundbreaking ceremony for the long-awaited Durham Transportation Station Center to be constructed on the site of the old Heart of Durham Hotel will become the new hub for DATA, our bus system and our taxi and other modes of transportation.
 - An agreement was reached with the NCDOT, West Village Developers and the city to renovate the Walker Warehouse to become the home of the Amtrak Station replacing the present woeful "Amshack" station on Pettigrew Street.

- West Village Phase II continues to be built out to the tune of \$150 million. A \$4 million streetscape project connecting Brightleaf to the City Center will begin soon.
- Historic Durham Athletic Park project was approved and includes a \$5 million renovation and a three-year operating agreement with Minor League Baseball, which will use the DAP as a national training facility for its 160 affiliated teams.
- American Tobacco continues its revitalization, with construction of Diamond View II.

Recognize Chris Stinnett: *I'd like to take a moment to recognize Chris Stinnett, whose restaurant and bakery Rue Cler became a part of the downtown landscape last year. We're as excited as you are to watch **your** success as our downtown area gets busier.*

I am proud to say that last year, when I called on the city to begin to focus more attention on inner city neighborhoods, the City administration responded. The City was not alone in heeding the call. I must also thank our community partners and corporations. In May, city department leaders, council members and I took a bus tour to identify inner city neighborhoods that needed help. They were: Northeast Central Durham, Southside/Rolling Hills and Southwest Central Durham.

Working closely with the administration, we stretched the success of downtown revitalization efforts into our inner city neighborhoods. 2007 witnessed great things happening in and for our more distressed neighborhoods. The completion of Phases 1 and 2 of Eastway Village, once known as Barnes Avenue, now has 16 new single-family homes and 16 condominiums. Phase 3 is expected to be completed by the end of 2008 with 8 new single-family homes. (15 total are planned.)

I believe we have present with us tonight, Ms. Carla Williams a new homeowner in Eastway Village who is a block captain in her neighborhood. An interview with her can also be seen on the city's website.

The Durham Housing Authority began the final construction phase of HOPE VI on the old Few Gardens site. The site will have 83 multi-family units and 42 homeownership units comprised of townhouses and single family units. The 83 multi-family units will be completed in June 2008 with lease up to follow and possibly 100% occupied by August 2008. The 42 homeownership units will begin construction in July of this year.

Thanks to the combined efforts of the Fire and Police Departments and Transportation division staff, more than 478 lights were installed on streets where darkness once shielded crime activity. Additionally, we established a process for ongoing reporting and repairing of street lights in these areas.

Voters approved a \$20 million dollar GO Bond Referendum to support the resurfacing of many of our city streets and surfacing of some of our dirt streets and sidewalk renovations. The public will begin seeing some of this work take place this summer.

City staff continues to turn in stellar performances and to receive recognition and awards from their peer organizations.

The Mayor's Summer Youth Work Program continues to be successful in finding jobs for our young people. Still there are more applicants than we have jobs (over 1 300 applicants for only 400 plus jobs).

Tonight I will focus primarily on three (3) areas:

- The Drought
- Neighborhood Revitalization
- Public Safety

The Drought

It is almost impossible to speak about the drought without speaking about climate changes which has contributed to our changing rain patterns. The "Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change" concluded unequivocally that climate change is underway and that it is primarily the result of our consumption of fossil fuels. The panel concluded that time is becoming short, if we are to avoid catastrophic consequences on a global scale. The growth in greenhouse gas emissions (primarily produced by fossil fuels) is contributing to the climate changes that we are experiencing. The United States has one of the highest rates of greenhouse gas emissions in the world; roughly twice per capita of gas emissions in Western Europe or Japan.

So as we begin locally to find short terms solutions to our drought problems we have to also look to long term solutions not just for our present generations but for future generations, for our children and our children's children.

As we enter the national election season, I am reminded of the saying, "that all politics are local". I say to you that the causes of global warming and Green House Gas (GHG) emissions are local. Locally, each of us has to do our part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In 2005, the GHG emission from city and county facilities (which includes schools, city county public buildings, vehicle fleets, water and sewage, streetlights, traffic lights, and solid waste from municipal operations) was 158,710 tons.

Fortunately, one of the important actions taken by the city council and county commissioners in September 2007, was the joint adoption of a **"Greenhouse Gas (GHG) and Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions Inventory and Local Action Plan"**. By the year 2030, we have set a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from city and county facilities by 50%. Meeting this goal would result in GHG emissions from city and county facilities dropping to **79,355 tons**.

In 2005, the GHG emission for all of Durham County was **6,837,430 tons**. By 2030, we have set a goal to reduce GHG emission by 30%; dropping emissions to **4,786,201 tons**.

County Commissioner Chairperson Ellen Reckhow and City Councilman Mike Woodard serve on the Green House Gas Advisory Committee. Although we have jointly agreed to have the county commissioners take the lead in this effort, I am requesting that the committee begin giving the city council a quarterly update as to its progress. There are lessons to be learned from our present water shortage. We must find solutions now rather than later. We must do everything we can to alert our citizens and help them to understand their role in helping to lower GHG emissions. We must lead by example!

Let me now speak to the drought and the near term actions that we have taken and other recommendations that I am making to address our immediate water needs.

2007 was a year that will forever change the way we think about one of our most precious resources, water. Because of the drought, one phrase that has become a part of everyday conversations in Durham and throughout the state of North Carolina is "Days of Supply". We all want to know that the City has enough water to sustain our everyday current activities, as well as, our future development.

Last January, no one could have predicted that we would be in the midst of a drought so serious that it would prompt Governor Easley to implore all citizens to conserve water and all public utilities to re-examine their water management plans to ensure that we have effective emergency drought plans in place.

Although Durham has two major reservoirs, Lake Michie and Little River, because of the drought, at its worst point, the city had a 36 days supply of premium water. In September 2007, in spite of the conservation efforts of Durham citizens, the city went from voluntary to mandatory restrictions. With little rain forecasted, it was apparent that more conservation measures were needed.

In December 2007, to extend the City's water supply by an additional 30 days (600 million gallons of water), plans were sped up to connect to the Durham Quarry (the old Teer Quarry). The city is now looking at the quarry as a long-term storage solution to be completed by 2009.

We are also examining other sources of water, including constructing an additional intake on Jordan Lake that will enable us to increase our current 2 million gallons per day through Cary, to our allotted 10 million gallons per day. The Council recently voted to begin engineering for a second interconnection to the Cary Water Supply system to increase the city's water supply by 7 millions gallons per day by the end of the summer.

In addition, the city has approved a contract to begin an engineering study that will help us repair the city's 100-plus year-old water pipes. We must do everything we can to reduce any water loss.

Today our Days of Supply is **193 days**. (*includes easily accessible water from reservoirs, Teer Quarry and below intake.*)

Ensuring that we have enough water for our immediate and long-term future does not come without a cost.

My colleague Councilman Eugene Brown as well as others has reminded us that we have charged to small a price for this precious commodity. The low price has possibly contributed to the water consumption habits of our customers. I think that most of my colleagues have agreed that we are at the point or have passed the point where we need to change our pricing structure. I have requested that the city administration begin to move rapidly and responsibly toward a tiered-rate structure, that charges heavy water users higher rates. While there are software concerns, as well as changes that need to be made to our billing cycle, it is imperative during this time of drought, that the heaviest users not only be convinced to use less, but to also pay for their high usage.

I hope that we can implement this system by the beginning of the fiscal year July 1, 2008. We should begin now to prepare our customers for this change. The idea is to encourage our customers to begin to conserve or be subjected to higher water rates. I am under no illusion that by simply implementing a tiered- rate structure, our water problems will be solved. This is another tool available to encourage conservation and at the same time help to maintain a sustainable water and sewer system. I am also asking the administration to let the council know what additional resources are needed to meet the date of having a tiered-rate system on line by July 1, 2008.

I also recognize the impact that our water shortage has on existing businesses and businesses that may want to expand or locate within our county. For that reason, I have resisted recommending more drastic actions, such as, declaring moratoriums on building and stopping the approval of new developments. In my opinion, a more important tool for the city to have is the legal authority to determine when and if persons can connect to our water and sewer systems. It is important that the public and developers know that we have that authority. I am requesting the administration to present a definitive proposal defining our legal authority to deny water and sewer connections for our consideration no later than our first work session on February 7th if not before at our January 27th work session.

I know also that many businesses are basing their business actions and water plans on when we may move to a stricter stage of conservation and they need long lead times in order for them to implement the ordering or installment of additional equipment to ensure that their water needs can be met. It is for that reason that I am requesting that the administration develop a clear check list that is simple to understand to let the public know what circumstances will trigger our going to a stricter water conservation stage (that is Stage V and beyond). I would expect that certainly one of the parameters on that check list would be our days of supply. We should also take measures to facilitate this information as widely and as timely as possible.

I and my colleagues have received many suggestions from well meaning persons as to the actions that we should take in dealing with this drought. We have also attended public meetings where suggestions have been made as well as questions asked as to what are we as a city are doing to address certain drought related matters. I am deeply appreciative of the energy and thoughtfulness of many of those persons. Some actions we could adopt and others we could not adopt for various reasons.

However, as a final recommendation to my colleagues there is one group that has adopted, in my opinion a very thoughtful resolution with very specific actions concerning water resources. I am not in total agreement with all of the recommendations and I know that some of those recommendations are presently being implemented or planned. I am of the opinion that the resolution itself is certainly worthy of our further consideration. The resolution to which I refer is the Water Resources Resolution adopted unanimously January 8, 2008 by the Durham City/County Planning Commission. This resolution was sent to the city council and county commissioners, the city and county managers as well as the Durham City/County Planning Department on January 11, 2008.

I am requesting that by our 2nd work session February 21st the city administration thoroughly review this resolution and be prepared to discuss as well as recommend to the city council which of these items can and should be enacted.

Recognize: Forest View Elementary School Class for their conservation actions. I'd like to take a moment to recognize Forest View Elementary teacher, Ms. Elizabeth McRainey and her 2nd grade class. Last November, City Manager Patrick Baker visited Ms. McRainey and her class and led them in a "Water -- Use It Wisely" pledge to show others, including their parents, relatives and friends the value of saving water. The pledge was broadcast through out the school. Ms. McRainey, thanks to you and your class for showing us the importance of making saving water a way of life. Thanks for being here tonight.

Inner-City Neighborhood Revitalization

Neighborhood inner city revitalization must remain a high priority on the city's agenda. Strong neighborhoods make for strong economies, which in turn makes for a strong city. As I previously indicated, for various reasons we have identified 3 major inner city neighborhoods for our immediate focus:

- North East Central Durham
- Southwest Central Durham
- Rolling Hills and the Southside communities.

Work has already begun in Northeast Central Durham and the Southwest Central Durham neighborhoods. Probably the most challenging work is in Northeast Central Durham primarily because of its size and the economic and physical condition of its housing stock. I recommended earlier this year that the Northeast Central Durham Committee be expanded to four (4) members consisting of our city council persons (Mayor ProTemp Cora Cole McFadden, Council persons Farad Ali, Eugene Brown and Howard Clement). I have asked Council Person Farad Ali to chair that committee. Councilman Ali has informed me that the committee will begin meeting on a regular basis the third Thursday of each month at 5:00pm in the city council committee room.

Dramatic changes are also being seen in Southwest Central Durham, where partnerships with neighborhood organizations, Duke University, Durham Community Land Trustees, Habitat for Humanity and Self-Help CDC have helped the City turn a \$1.2 million housing investment in a targeted area into new housing valued at \$8.2 million. The investments have increased the number of owner-occupied homes in these neighborhoods by 12 percent.

The Rolling Hills Southside neighborhood is an important prime location, with a rich history and complements the investments both public and private that have been made and is continuing to be made in out downtown. The city council and administration has proceeded slowly and cautiously as it has worked to develop a plan for the revitalization of this area. The city has now contracted with two prominent firms (McCormack Baron, Streuver and Rouse) to begin developing a plan for the redevelopment of these neighborhoods. An essential parameter for the success of this revitalization will be the involvement of the residents and property owners of these neighborhoods in all stages of the planning. This is a long range effort in terms of planning and development, but as in any development you have to take the first step, which is what the city now has done.

Finally some of you may have seen the article in the Saturday (1/19/2008) edition of the N&O Durham News of the efforts under way by Uplift East Durham. All of those residents are to be congratulated for the initiatives they are taking to improve their neighborhood and I am sure that they can count on the city to be as supportive as possible in their endeavors.

Public Safety

Third and finally, I want to address the issue of public safety. I have consistently said that reducing crime is going to take a community effort. Law enforcement plays a key role and is a part of the solution in reducing crime, but it is not all of the solution. Reducing violent crime and homicides is also going to require this community and the judicial systems to assume a different mindset about persons who commit violence using guns. We have got to get tougher on persons that commit violent crime using guns. In short we have got to find an equitable way to keep them off the streets. If caught committing a crime with a gun we need to make it harder for them to get out of jail before going to trial. If that means setting higher bonds, so be it. If it means stopping judges from reducing bonds so low that it allows them to get out of jail before trial, so be it. If we need to approach our legislators to get this authority from the general assembly so be it.

So much violence with the use of guns in our community has got to be reduced if not stopped.

You may have seen recent articles or heard statements that reference the issue of how bonds are set in Durham. There is some concern that bonds set in Durham are not appropriate for the crime. First let me say, I strongly believe in due process and that the amount of the bond should be appropriate for the crime. However, the numbers of individuals who while out of jail on bond are alleged to have committed additional serious crimes and in particular, crimes committed with guns are very disturbing. We have got to find a way to send a message to persons who use guns or are prone to use guns to commit violent crimes that they are going to be severely punished and we need to find a way to get them off of the streets. Today I met with the city manager and Chief District and Superior Court Judges (Bushfan and Hudson), Chief Magistrate Elaine Evans and Trial Court Administrator Kathy Shuart to discuss this matter. I am asking the City Manager and his administration to continue the collaboration that we had today with the Chief District and Superior Court Judges (Bushfan and Hudson) and other appropriate elements of Durham's criminal justice community to reexamine the appropriate level of bonds set for individuals charged with serious criminal offenses as well as the monitoring of these individuals as they await trial.

Now, let's take a look at the numbers from last year. While violent crime (consisting of homicides, aggravated assaults, rape and robbery) overall was down compared to 2006, especially in the area of robberies, burglaries and homicides are up. What has become apparent to me is that this community when called upon can successfully work to reduce crime. When we had the high numbers of homicides in 2004 and 2005 we called on the community to work together to effectively reduce the number of homicides and in 2006, we did. When we noticed in 2006 that the number of violent crimes was increasing we asked that there be a focus on reducing the number of violent crimes in 2007 and we see that violent crime was down even though the number of homicides were again up.

Durham Police Department Five-Year Crime Statistics

	2003	2004	2005	2006	Projected 2007
Murder	22	32	35	14	26
Rape	77	89	85	100	94
Robbery	883	814	627	975	789
Aggravated Assault	682	626	726	857	819
Total Violent Crime	1,664	1,561	1,473	1,946	1,728
Burglary	3,528	3,249	3,157	3,084	3,627
Larceny	9,027	8,040	7,944	7,475	7,127
Motor Vehicle Theft	1,066	946	936	1,118	1,015
Total Property Crime	13,621	12,235	12,037	11,677	11,769
Total Crime Index	15,285	13,796	13,510	13,623	13,497

What these numbers don't show is the number of violent crimes that involved the use of guns. In the case of homicides over 70% involved the use of guns.

While any level of crime is not tolerable, I believe we are making strides, thanks to the efforts of the Police department, and you in the community.

Community Policing, which encourages the community to get involved saw a record 120 communities participating in last year's National Night Out.

The Mayor's Domestic Violence Task Force was formed under the Human Relations Department Director Yvonne Pena to look at the "Root Causes of Crime" as it pertained to domestic violence.

Azalea Park Apartments Manager Donna Brustad, who I think is present tonight, talks about how her complex is now fully occupied thanks to citizen involvement in the fight against crime. You can see her comments on the city's website.

Also, the City's fight against gangs continues. The gang assessment report provided real feedback on how the City must work together to overcome this problem. The city recently hired an anti-gang coordinator to coalesce Durham's efforts. We look forward to his work.

Many other resources, including over a million dollars funding from the federal government to help us and this region wage our fight against gangs.

Another important and proven action that has had an impact on crime is nuisance abatement actions: In an effort to hold property owners accountable for repeated criminal activity on their property, the City has successfully pursued nuisance abatement actions in the past.

In 1998, the former 14 Karat Dinner Theatre, a magnet for criminal activity in Northeast Central Durham was transformed into a Day Care Center. In 2000, the former Durham Inn, another magnet for criminal activity situated along our Interstate 85 corridor was transformed into the Good Samaritan Inn, which provides quality shelter and training opportunities for homeless women and children. These positive transformations would not have occurred without the City's successful prosecutions of nuisance abatement actions. I would ask the administration to identify other properties in the city that may be considered for nuisance abatement and prosecute such actions when the evidence warrants.

I am again asking the police department to focus heavily on reducing all categories of violent crime and to present a plan for the council's consideration as to how they are going to accomplish this objective. I'd like to hear from Project Safe Neighborhood and their goals for getting more illegal guns off of the street. I am again appealing to the community to work with the police department and other agencies to help reduce crime as well as reducing the root causes of crime. Time is of the essence we have started the year with 2 homicides, 2 homicides too many.

There is so much more we can talk about, but you should know that your city is on sound financial footing. We continue our Triple A rating with our bond agencies, and speaking of bonds, our bond dollars, are hard at work. This year, you will see many streets repaved and sidewalk built with the \$20 million bond referendum you approved last year.

This year, you will see and hear many more of the city's more than 80 building projects – from road, to parks, to cultural facilities, as they begin to come to fruition.

As you might remember, ongoing maintenance of our infrastructure – our roads, our water and sewer system, and our buildings – is vital. We can pay now, or pay more later. And, as we are doing now, we are playing catch up. We must continue to plan for our children's future.

In closing, the state of the city of Durham continues on the upswing. However I would have been remiss in my role as mayor in delivering the state of the city address, if I didn't note that there are challenges that continue to face us and new challenges that will face us this year – but I believe they all are challenges that, by working together, in the word of the great Reverend Dr. Martin Luther Jr., whose birthday we celebrate, "We will overcome."

As I've said in past state of the city addresses: Durham truly is a city **where great things happen**. Thank you for your time and support. God bless you, and God bless Durham.